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ABSTRACT

Results of the fall 1983 survey of enrollments at private colleges and universities are presented. Of the approximately 1,500 independent colleges, more than 1,200 institutions responded. Survey findings include the following: only universities lost total enrollment, while two-year colleges increased enrollment by 5.6 percent; total enrollment increased in all regions; almost 412,000 full-time freshmen entered private colleges; graduate enrollment increased by 2.63 percent; 65 universities, which account for about 4 percent of all private colleges, enrolled about 44 percent of all graduate students; and universities and specialized institutions enrolled about 76 percent of all first-professional students, with comprehensive colleges and universities accounting for another 21 percent. Data are provided that show aggregate and median percentage change in full-time entering freshmen by type of institution. Additional statistical tables cover the following: percent change of entering freshmen by region and size of college; full-time and part-time undergraduate enrollment; percent change in undergraduate enrollment by type of institution, region, and institution size; full-time and part-time graduate and first professional enrollment trends; and headcount enrollment trends. (SW)

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A YEAR OF STABILITY:

Fall 1983 Enrollment at Independent Colleges and Universities

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December 1983

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FALL 1983 ENROLLMENT AT INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

After a year of major enrollment declines, 1983 was an important year for independent colleges and universities. Some observers questioned whether the sector could regain the stability of past years and forestall further erosion in the enrollment of entering freshmen. Many colleges took steps to increase recruitment efforts in order to counter two important problems: the declining purchasing power of federal student aid programs and a smaller pool of high school graduates. The Congressional commitment to student aid, increased optimism about the economy, and diligent efforts by colleges and universities to retain current students and attract new ones, combined to return stability to enrollment in independent institutions in the fall of 1983. Total enrollment increased slightly in all regions and among most types of institutions. Still, the modest increases in full-time students were not large enough to offset the losses suffered in the fall of 1982.

The National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities (NIICU) conducted this seventh annual survey of fall enrollment to provide timely and accurate information for executive officers of our colleges and universities and for policy makers at the state and national levels. All of the approximately 1,500 independent institutions were surveyed and more than 1,200 institutions, enrolling 81 percent of all students, responded. (A full technical appendix is available from NIICU.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- More than 2.65 million students attended independent colleges and universities in the fall of 1983, an increase of 0.91 percent from fall 1982.

- There were significant differences among types of institutions. Only universities lost total enrollment, while the gains among other types of colleges varied from a 0.05 percent increase in comprehensive colleges and universities to a 5.60 percent increase in the number of students attending two-year colleges.

- Total enrollment increased in all regions. The magnitude of the increases varied from 0.17 percent and 0.28 percent in the Northeastern and Midwestern regions respectively, to increases of 2.06 percent in both the Southern and Western regions. These increases differ sharply from the results reported in fall 1982 when all regions except the South reported declines in enrollment.

- Almost 412,000 full-time freshmen entered independent colleges and universities for the first time this fall, an increase of 1.43 percent over fall 1982. Even with this increase, the current number of entering freshmen is three percent below the number who entered in fall 1981. Unless more students have remained in college or additional transfers have been attracted, most freshman and sophomore classes are smaller this year than in the recent past.

- In fall 1983 the change in the number of entering freshmen varied from a modest loss of 0.60 percent in the Mid-Atlantic region to an increase of 3.82 percent in the Southern region. This is quite different from last fall when all regions suffered losses of full-time entering freshmen.

- Graduate enrollment increased by 2.63 percent in fall 1983. Total enrollment of first-professional students was up 0.39 percent due to an increase in the number of part-time students.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Entering Freshman Enrollment Increases, But Does Not Recover Last Year's Loss

Enrollment of full-time entering freshmen often foretells the future health of an institution; it is the independent sector's seismometer. Last year, in the fall of 1982, two-thirds of all independent colleges and universities lost enrollment in this most important category. Every region and all types of institutions except specialized colleges reported losses.

Fall 1983 brought a welcome return to stability for most institutions. Nationally, enrollment of full-time entering freshmen increased 1.43 percent with a median percentage change of 1.08 percent. However, this increase is so small that the size of the 1983 freshman class is still three percentage points below the level of two years ago.

Table 1 shows aggregate and median percentage changes in full-time entering freshmen by type of institution. (See Appendix A for definitions.) Both the aggregate percentage change and the median percentage change are presented to give the reader a more complete view of the differences among institutions. While the aggregate percentage change accurately depicts the difference in the total number of students attending a particular type of institution, it can be driven by very dramatic changes in a few institutions, thereby presenting a distorted picture. In such cases, the median percentage enrollment change

presents a more realistic representation. Half of all colleges and universities fared better than the median, and half did not do as well. The median percentage change, therefore, often is viewed as the "typical" change.

It is interesting to note that the specialized institutions, which were the only type of independent colleges to gain enrollment of freshmen in fall 1982, lost enrollment this fall. Still, three of the five types of colleges increased freshman enrollment and the losses in the comprehensive colleges and the specialized institutions were slight.

TABLE 1
FULL-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN: FALL 1983
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

Type of Institution	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.43%	1.08%
Universities	0.80	0.88
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	-0.10	0.61
Liberal Arts Colleges	2.49	2.21
Two-Year Colleges	5.31	3.93
Specialized	-0.[illegible]	-1.03

Table 2 illustrates the changes in freshman enrollment among regions. (See Appendix B for definitions.) Four of the five regions saw increases in entering freshman between fall 1982 and fall 1983. While every region reported losses of full-time entering freshmen last year in fall 1982, only the Mid-Atlantic region lost enrollment in this category for a second year. (Even with this small loss, the institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region rebounded considerably from the 1982 loss of 6.60 percent.) Only the Southern region showed increases large enough to recover fully from the losses experienced in the fall of 1982. The median percentage increase was also greatest in the South.

TABLE 2
FULL-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN: FALL 1983
BY REGION

Region	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.43%	1.08%
Midwestern	2.64	0.00
Mid-Atlantic	-0.60	1.37
Northeastern	0.99	0.25
Southern	3.82	3.75
Western	0.08	1.22

The reversal of last year's decline in full-time entering freshmen was also evident among institutions by size. (See Table 3.) In fact, institutions with enrollments between 1,000 and 2,500 showed the largest median increase after facing the most severe decline in fall 1982.

TABLE 3
FULL-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN: FALL 1983
BY SIZE OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Category	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.43%	1.08%
Less than 1,000	2.64	1.26
1,000 - 2,500	1.66	1.63
More than 2,500	0.81	0.22

Undergraduate Enrollment Up in Spite of Smaller Sophomore Class

More than 1.87 million undergraduate students enrolled in independent colleges and universities in fall 1983, an increase of 1.31 percent from fall 1982. Almost two-thirds of this growth is a result of the 4.72 percent aggregate increase in part-time undergraduates.

This follows an increase of 2.79 percent in part-time students in fall 1982. These changes lead to a 0.88 percent increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. Table 4 shows these increases.

TABLE 4
UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983

Enrollment Category	Fall 1983 Enrollment	Aggregate Change 1982 to 1983	Median Change 1982 to 1983
Full-Time	1,537,902	0.60%	0.43%
Part-Time	335,039	4.72	2.55
Total Headcount	1,872,941	1.31	0.66
Total FTE	1,649,582	0.88	0.55

Table 5 presents the changes in undergraduate enrollment by type of institution. Most colleges and universities within each category increased their undergraduate enrollment, with only the universities losing in aggregate terms. The 0.36 decline in enrollment in universities followed a similar decline in the fall of 1982. The slight enrollment increase in comprehensive colleges and universities could not offset last year's decline of 1.43 percent, but the 2.12 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment in liberal arts colleges allowed these colleges to recover the losses incurred in 1982. Two-year colleges and specialized institutions reported the largest increases, repeating their positive performances of last year.

TABLE 5
UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

Type of Institution	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.31%	0.66%
Universities	-0.36	1.50
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	0.13	0.20
Liberal Arts Colleges	2.12	0.70
Two-Year Colleges	5.04	3.90
Specialized	3.69	0.55

The changes in undergraduate enrollments generally mirrored the differences in freshman enrollments, where only the Mid-Atlantic region did not show an increase. (See Table 6.) Only the Western region reported an increase in undergraduate enrollment greater than the increase in entering freshmen. An encouraging note is that most colleges in each region scored an increase in undergraduate enrollments in fall 1983.

TABLE 6
UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY REGION

Region	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.31%	0.66%
Midwestern	2.24	0.90
Mid-Atlantic	-0.04	0.55
Northeastern	0.59	0.49
Southern	1.92	0.40
Western	3.13	1.42

Table 7 shows that increases were reported in each enrollment category when the institutions are grouped by size, both in aggregate and median percentages. The median percentage increase equaled 0.66 percent -- a steady state.

TABLE 7
UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY SIZE OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Category	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	1.31%	0.66%
Less than 1,000	2.50	1.05
1,000 - 2,500	1.51	0.62
More than 2,500	0.85	0.40

Graduate Enrollment Up

The increases in the number of graduate students attending independent colleges and universities outpaced the modest increases in undergraduate enrollment. Full-time enrollment increased 2.83 percent, while the enrollment of part-time graduate students was up 2.50 percent. More than 60 percent of all graduate students attend on a part-time basis. Table 8 shows these increases.

TABLE 8
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983

Enrollment Category	Fall 1983 Enrollment	Aggregate Change 1982 to 1983	Median Change 1982 to 1983
Full-Time	165,934	2.83%	0.00%
Part-Time	249,983	2.50	1.82
Total Headcount	415,917	2.63	2.08
Total FTE	249,262	2.71	1.51

The enrollment of graduate students in independent institutions is concentrated in the 65 universities, which account for approximately four percent of all independent institutions but enroll 44 percent of all graduate students. Comprehensive colleges and universities enroll almost one-third of all graduate students, 13 percent are enrolled in specialized institutions, and 11 percent are enrolled in liberal arts colleges.

Nationally, graduate student enrollment grew by 2.63 percent between fall 1982 and fall 1983, increasing by more than 10,000 students. At universities, where 77 percent of the graduate enrollment is full-time, the overall increase was 1.95 percent with the typical institution reporting an increase of just more than one percent. In the comprehensive colleges and universities, the overall increase was 2.38 percent, with an increase of 1.59 percent in the specialized institutions. The relatively large growth of 9.22 percent in graduate students attending liberal arts colleges was due almost totally to increases in the number of part-time students. Table 9 shows these changes.

TABLE 9
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

Type of Institution	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	2.63%	2.08%
Universities	1.95	1.09
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	2.38	1.64
Liberal Arts Colleges	9.22	7.68
Two-Year Colleges	--	--
Specialized	1.59	2.03

Table 10 presents the changes in enrollment by region. Each region showed increases in graduate enrollment, achieved in different ways. The Southern institutions had the greatest percentage expansion, 5.95 percent, with growth in full-time graduate enrollment exceeding increases in part-time enrollment by nearly 2 to 1. Similarly, the Northeastern institutions credit most of their 2.25 percent gain to increases in the number of full-time students. Colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic region grew by 1.94 percent in graduate enrollment, with a large influx of part-time students offsetting a smaller decline in the enrollment of full-time students. In the Midwest, the 3.29 percent increase was a result of growing enrollment in part-time students at a 3 to 1 rate over the increase in full-time enrollment. Finally, the growth of 1.19 percent in the West was caused by increases in the number of full-time graduate students, accounting for 95 percent of the growth.

TABLE 10
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY REGION

Region	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	2.63%	2.08%
Midwestern	3.29	3.57
Mid-Atlantic	1.94	1.65
Northeastern	2.25	3.86
Southern	5.95	1.85
Western	1.19	1.12

Total First-Professional Enrollment Steady Due to Increases in the Number of Part-Time Students

Students seeking degrees in law, medicine, veternary medicine, and theology are generally considered first-professional students, while other post-baccalureate students are classified as graduate students. Universities and specialized institutions enroll about 76 percent of all first-professional students, with comprehensive colleges and universities accounting for another 21 percent. The remaining three percent are enrolled at the liberal arts colleges. In striking contrast to graduate enrollment, where most students are enrolled on a part-time basis, 87.7 percent of all first-professional students attend on a full-time basis.

Nationally, first-professional enrollments increased 0.39 percent, with increases in part-time enrollments offsetting a slight decline in full-time enrollment. (See Table 11.)

TABLE 11
FIRST PROFESSIONAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983

Enrollment Category	Fall 1983 Enrollment	Aggregate Change 1982 to 1983	Median Change 1982 to 1983
Full-Time	142,758	-0.39%	0.11%
Part-Time	21,648	5.66	0.00
Total Headcount	164,406	0.39	0.33
Total FTE	149,974	-0.10	0.43

Table 12 presents the changes by institutional type. Universities showed no change, with a decline in full-time enrollment cancelling the growth in the number of part-time students. Comprehensive colleges and universities lost first-professional enrollment, declining by 1.91 percent, combining a loss in full-time students with a small gain in part-time students.

The large percentage increase in first-professional students attending liberal arts colleges should not be misunderstood. Less than one percent of the students attending liberal arts colleges are enrolled in first-professional programs, and the seemingly large percentage increase represents less than 500 students nationwide. The specialized institutions increased their first-professional enrollment by 1.34 percent, with increases in part-time students accounting for about 75 percent of the growth.

TABLE 12
FIRST PROFESSIONAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

Type of Institution	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	0.39%	0.33%
Universities	0.02	-0.35
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	-1.91	-0.94
Liberal Arts Colleges	9.02	-0.06
Two-Year Colleges	--	--
Specialized	1.34	0.94

Only two regions had significant changes in their first-professional enrollments. (See Table 13.) The colleges and universities in the Northeastern region scored increases in both full-time and part-time students, with an overall increase of 2.91 percent; and Western colleges and universities suffered a 1.24 percent decline, with a small increase in part-time enrollment failing to offset the loss in full-time students. The three other regions remained within 0.60 percent of last fall's enrollment.

TABLE 13
FIRST PROFESSIONAL: FALL 1983
BY REGION

Region	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	0.39%	0.33%
Midwestern	0.42	1.10
Mid-Atlantic	-0.43	-0.78
Northeastern	2.91	1.45
Southern	0.60	0.74
Western	-1.24	0.14

Total Enrollment Up Slightly

Total enrollment (headcount) at independent colleges and universities increased almost one percent in fall 1983, bringing the total level to more than 2.65 million students. A growing proportion of these students -- now 29 percent -- are enrolled on a part-time basis. This increase in total enrollment reflected a 1.31 percent increase in undergraduates, a 1.98 percent increase in graduate and professional students, and a 5.09 percent decline in unclassified students.

TABLE 14
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983

Enrollment Category	Fall 1983 Enrollment	Aggregate Change 1982 to 1983	Median Change 1982 to 1983
Full-Time	1,878,784	0.60%	0.55%
Part-Time	771,860	4.72	2.15
Total Headcount	2,650,644	0.91	0.81
Total FTE	2,136,071	0.88	0.85

Table 15 focuses on the changes in enrollment by institutional type. With total enrollment driven largely by undergraduate enrollment, the changes shown below closely correspond to those reflected in Table 5 on page 5. Only the universities had a slight decline in enrollment, while all other types of institutions scored gains. Only the two-year colleges reported sizable increases, with an aggregate percentage change of 5.60 percent and a median percentage increase of 3.84 percent.

TABLE 15
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983

Type of Institution	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	0.91%	0.81%
Universities	-0.52	0.01
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	0.05	-0.09
Liberal Arts Colleges	1.87	1.15
Two-Year Colleges	5.60	3.84
Specialized	2.34	1.23

In Table 16 the emphasis shifts to changes in total enrollment within geographical regions. Total headcount enrollment increased in every region between fall 1982 and fall 1983, varying from slight increases of 0.17 percent in the Northeast and 0.28 percent in the Mid-Atlantic states to increases exceeding two percentage points in the Southern and Western regions. This year's increase, reported by all five regions, varies considerably from the changes reported in fall 1982, when four of the five regions suffered declines in total enrollment.

TABLE 16
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY REGION

Region	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	0.91%	0.81%
Midwestern	1.63	0.95
Mid-Atlantic	0.28	1.05
Northeastern	0.17	0.34
Southern	2.06	1.33
Western	2.06	0.79

Table 17 reflects the same positive results. Colleges and universities of all sizes reported increases.

TABLE 17
TOTAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY SIZE OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Category	Aggregate Percent Change 1982 to 1983	Median Percent Change 1982 to 1983
All Colleges and Universities	0.91%	0.81%
Less than 1,000	2.68	1.38
1,000 - 2,500	1.29	0.72
More than 2,500	0.31	0.07

Enrollment in Perspective

The impact of changes in undergraduate, graduate and first-professional enrollment varies widely among independent colleges and universities. Viewed within the context of institutional type, the effects of this year's enrollment can be understood more fully. Table 18 shows that while undergraduate students make up less then 60 percent of the enrollment in universities, they contribute more than 85 percent of the total enrollment in liberal arts colleges. Conversely, the enrollment trends for graduate students are very important for universities, but have a major impact on very few liberal arts colleges.

Table 18 shows also that universities represent only four percent of all institutions, but enroll a quarter of all students. Ten percent of all independent institutions are comprehensive colleges and universities, and they enroll an additional quarter of the students. Liberal arts colleges are the predominant type of institution, totaling 39 percent of all institutions and enrolling 30 percent of all students. Two-year colleges are typically smaller colleges, claiming 14 percent of the institutions and enrolling six percent of the students, while specialized institutions total almost a third of all independent institutions but enrolling only 14 percent of all students.

TABLE 18
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION
OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT: FALL 1983
BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

Type of Institution	Undergrad. As Percent Of Total Headcount	Graduate As Percent Of Total Headcount	First Professional As Percent Of Total Headcount	All Other As Percent Of Total Headcount	Enrollment by Institutional Type as Percent of National Total
All Colleges and Universities	72.4%	14.4%	5.8%	7.3%	100.0%
Universities	59.5	24.8	8.9	6.9	25.2
Comprehensive Colleges and Universities	72.8	15.4	3.7	8.1	24.3
Liberal Arts Colleges	86.4	5.0	0.8	7.8	30.5
Two-Year Colleges	94.9	0.1	0.0	5.0	5.8
Specialized	60.0	17.6	16.5	5.9	14.1

Therefore, the relative importance of changes in different enrollment categories depends, in large measure, on where those changes occurred. When using enrollment as a measure of the health of independent higher education, it is important to understand the significance of the data in Table 18. A large percentage increase or

decrease in an enrollment category can mean only a very small difference in the actual number of students. On the other hand, a small percentage increase or decrease can mean a significant difference in the actual number of students, depending on the type of institution. This is important not only when compairing enrollment changes among different types of independent colleges and universities, but also when comparing these data with enrollment in state operated institutions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Definitions of Institutional Categories
Using the Carnegie* Classification System

A. Research Universities: awarded at least 20 Ph.D.s or were among the leading 100 universities in terms of federal financial support for academic science for at least two years between 1972-1973 and 1974-1975.

B. Comprehensive Universities and Colleges: offer liberal arts and at least one professional program (many offer masters programs).

C. Liberal Arts Colleges.

D. Two-Year Colleges.

E. Specialized Institutions: Free-standing institutions offering degrees in Religion; Teachers Colleges, Medical Schools and Centers; and, specialized institutions and schools of Health Professions, Engineering and Technology, Business and Management, Art, Music and Design, and Law.

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* A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, Revised Edition. Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (Berkeley: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1976.)

APPENDIX B

NIICU Regions

Midwestern Region	-	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska. North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
Mid-Atlantic Region	-	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
Northeastern Region	-	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
Southern Region	-	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas
Western Region	-	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington